



**Draft Minutes of HCA Board of Directors Meeting      November 17, 2021      Zoom**

Board Members Attending: Cynthia Shelmerdine, David Jean, Sally Mackenzie, Peggy Muir, Ed Harris, Barbara Merson, Kathy Wilson. Absent: Nancy Andersen  
Also in attendance: Scott Barksdale, HOS; Amy Bundt, Director of Finance and Operations; Fern Desjardins, Maine Charter Commission

**Cynthia called the meeting to order at 4:39 pm.**

Consent agenda (Minutes of the October 20, 2021 and policy EFE—food sales) was adopted.

She noted that if people need to be absent, they should notify the secretary before the meeting.

**Update from Head of School :**

Scott updated the Board on the last month of the school year. He provided a thorough report to the Board orally and in written form via email.

- He noted events to celebrate including the end of the first trimester, beginning of internships, and establishment of Affinity Crews.
- Cynthia urged BOD members to attend the play “Gaslight” in the auditorium on November 18 and 19 at 7 pm and November 20 at 2 pm. (Call Angie for tickets) and the Celebration of Learning at both campuses on December 1.

Two items of concern are the numbers of students not staying at the school after their years in Division 1 so that grades 9 and 10 have low enrollments and the decrease in student attendance in November. With regard to the former issue, Scott noted that Division 2 Passage lacks clarity. The latter can be attributed somewhat to the increase in Covid cases at the school. Obviously, all issues are being addressed.

**Finance and Facilities Committee**

Dave described the quarterly (up-to-September 30) budget report which BOD members received. At the January meeting we will see a recast budget report based on changes that have been made in the first half of the year. Dave also said that next year will be tough. He expects to see a

forecast of the budget for 2022-23 early next year, so we will know where we are headed and can make some decisions about needs going forward.

On a motion by Dave, seconded by Kathy to take out a loan for \$130,000 for construction to cover all capital improvements at Division 2/3, the roll call vote was unanimous.

A long discussion of the move to join the state retirement system, MPERS, followed. Scott said that teachers (including Ed techs) and administrators would be included. He thought that operations team members should be included also in order to hire and retain good people. Peggy concurred saying that is very much in keeping with the philosophy of the school. She said it is an important message about HCA: Everybody is essential to a good school. All people will be supported equally at HCA.

The cost of this benefit to employees adds significantly to the budget. Dave pointed out the inefficiencies of having two campuses. As we approach renewing our charter contract, we will have to consider ways to reorganize in order to provide a good educational experience to our students.

Peggy made the motion to join MPERS. Ed seconded.

The motion:

Harpswell Coastal Academy will join the Maine Public Employees Retirement System as a Participating Local District effective January 1, 2022, and:

- a.) To cover with Regular Plan AC its teachers, ed techs and operation team members who are at or above 0.8 FTE and administrators who are at or above 0.5 FTE;
- b.) To authorize Scott Barkdsale, Head of School to sign the contract between the school and Maine Public Employees Retirement System;
- c.) To exclude all other employees from participating in MainePERS, including school members;
- d.) To allow its eligible employees who are currently employed by the school on January 1, 2022, who elect to join MainePERS, to purchase prior service upon the employee's full payment of all associated costs. The school will not participate in the purchase of prior service, so employees are responsible for paying the full liability associated with this service. (Optional)

The results of the roll call vote: Five members in favor; two abstained.

### **Development and Marketing Committee**

Barbara mentioned long and short-term goals. For both development and recruitment, stories about HCA students and learning activities need to be published. The immediate short-term goal, based on the previous giving pattern, is to send a letter to prospective donors as soon as possible so people will make donations by the end of the calendar year. Barbara will write the letter based

on information from Scott. She will work out a plan for BOD members to write personal notes on each appeal letter.

### **Executive Committee**

Cynthia presented five policies for a first reading by the Board. There was discussion of the Administrator Hiring Procedures (GCFB-R). Peggy asked for more inclusion of stakeholders in the hiring process. Cynthia took notes on the suggested additions.

Cynthia mentioned that Susan Prince had vetted the Special Education policy (IHBAA-R) and that our lawyer will also be sure it's in legal compliance. The other policies, dealing with selection of materials (IJJ and IJJ-E) and student records (JRA) received no comment. The homeschooling policy (IHBG, with related IHBGA) doesn't apply to HCA; Gina Post has given Cynthia language for that circumstance.

Cynthia will convene the Executive Committee in December to vote on these policies so HCA will be in compliance, as much as possible, with state expectations by December 31. On a suggestion by Barbara, these policies will also be on the consent agenda at the Board's January meeting.

### **Public comment**

Fern Desjardins, HCA's liaison on the Charter Commission, congratulated us on how we managed to deal with tough financial issues as we face some concerns about our future.

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 on a motion by Ed, seconded by Sally.



November 22, 2021